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JPRS L/8316

7 March 1979

TRANSLATIONS ON NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA  
(FOUO 6/79)

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EAST

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## TRANSLATIONS ON NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

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ALGERIA

NATURE, EFFECTIVENESS OF OPPOSITION DISCUSSED

Profile of the Opposition

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 27 Dec 78 and 3 Jan 79 pp 56-58

[Article by Mohamed Salem: "Is the Opposition To Be Taken Into Account?"]

[Text] The silence of the opponents of President Houari Boumediene while the office seemed to be vacant following the agony of the head of state had surprised the partisans and adversaries of the regime. This silence was abruptly broken. Communiques, pamphlets, and declarations to the press have succeeded one another, provoking an immediate reaction by the government. "These ghosts from abroad have no political future in our country," the Algerian press stated. The internal opponents (in jail or under house arrest) seem to be scattered. But they were characterized as "men of the past" not long ago.

Opposition

"Ghosts from abroad" or "men of the past," the leaders of the opposition nevertheless all played a role, often a determining one, in the history of the Algerian resistance. Since the assassination of Mohamed Khider in Madrid, that of Krim Belkacem at Frankfurt-am-Main, and the death of Kaid Ahmed in Morocco, 14 personalities have dominated the Algerian opposition. Who are they and what do they want?

Five cannot express themselves today. They are deprived of liberty in Algeria: Ahmed Ben Bella, held since 1965; Ferhat Abbas, Ben Youssef Ben Khedda, Hocine Lahouel, and Mohamed Kheir Eddine, placed under house arrest in 1976 following the appeal that they made criticizing the internal and external policy of the regime.

Two are veterans: Mohamed Boudiaf and Hocine Ait Ahmed. The former withdrew from the National Liberation Front in 1962 and founded the PRS [Party of the Socialist Revolution]. The latter tried first to oppose by parliamentary means the monopolization of power by Ben Bella. In 1963 he established the Front of Socialist Forces and engaged in armed struggle until his arrest in October 1964. Condemned to death in April 1965 and then pardoned by Ben Bella shortly before the toppling of the latter from power, Hocine Ait Ahmed escaped

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on 1 May 1978 from the El-Harrach prison where the regime which ascended to power on 19 June 1965 had confined him. Boudiaf and Ait Ahmed live in exile, the former in Morocco and the latter in Switzerland.

The seven other personalities joined the opposition after Col Houari Boumediene's coup d'etat. Faithful to the regime of Ahmed Ben Bella, Hocine Zahouane and Mohamed Harbi refused to become involved with the men of 19 June. Following a short-lived cooperation, Mohamed el-Hadi Hadi-Smaine, Ali Mahsas and Bachir [Bechir] Boumaaza left the government and the country. Mohamed Lebjaoui, former head of the FLN federation of France, went to Switzerland where he established the Algerian Movement of Popular Forces and of the Army for Democracy and Unity in the Maghreb (MAFPADUM). Ali Mahsas on his part created the National Rally for Democracy in Paris.

To Counterbalance the Government

The seventh opposition member is Col Tahar Zbiri, one of the major artisans of the coup d'etat of 19 June 1965. He himself arrested ex-president Ahmed Ben Bella who had just appointed Zbiri as chief of staff in the hope of counterbalancing the power of Col Houari Boumediene. But toward the end of 1967 serious difficulties confronted the president of the Council of the Revolution and the chief of staff. Tahar Zbiri tried to stage a march on Algiers at the head of an armored column. His move having failed, Zbiri took refuge first in Tunisia and then in Morocco.

Institutional Failure

All these opposition members know that power is not there just for the asking. They are nevertheless persuaded that despite the superficial agreement which seems to be taking shape, differences continue within the leadership team.

Mohamed Boudiaf feels that with the death of President Boumediene "the context has changed radically. At this time it is not known who is in charge of the army, who is the center of power."

For Ait Ahmed the power vacuum is due to an institutional failure which is reflected in the freezing of an administration premised on the monopoly of power. But, he added, "the era of scapegoats and of the settlement of accounts should be over." According to him there are two possible options: A democratic opening up or the hardening of lines.

Mohamed Harbi and Hocine Zahouane believe on their part that "Algeria will witness a period of institutional instability which can aggravate its situation." Would Boumediene's succession be finalized by a struggle "among groups and individuals separated more by their ambitions than their ideas within the power apparatus" or become the occasion "for the people to assume responsibility for their destiny," they wondered in an "Appeal Addressed to the Algerian Workers."



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Democratization

The National Movement for Liberty and Democracy (UNLD), which claims to be close to Ben Youssef Ben Khedda and his companions, mentioned in a bulletin published in Algeria that Boumediene's illness "evidenced the vacuum of the institutions built by him alone." In this view it is the "survivors" of the Council of the Revolution who would monopolize power instead of the projected institutions.

What can be the outcome for Algeria? Mohamed Boudiaf, in a five-point plan, proposed notably "the dissolution of the National Liberation Front and of all the nonrepresentative organizations, the immediate return of the multi-party system," and freedom of expression for all Algerians.

Democracy could be imposed on the government by the majority of Algerians. Then, "it will be urgent to solve the everyday problems," he asserted. "There can be no talk of ideology, of a class struggle with empty stomachs." The process of democratization sought by the leader of the PRS should be initiated by elections, within 6 months, for a constituent assembly with free choice of candidates and campaigns. This constituent assembly would be charged with elaborating a new Constitution and designating a transitional government.

Ait Ahmed also feels that "devilish arrangements among various feudal bailiwicks" should be excluded. The return to popular legitimacy has to be concretized by the election of a sovereign constituent assembly. An interim government, Ait Ahmed continues, formed of "wise patriots," without any exclusion of members of the present government or opposition political parties, should be formed. It should create a climate of "profound reconciliation" which implies the liberation of all political prisoners.

Beyond political or ideological divergences, the revamping of the existing structures of the government recurs as a theme in all comments. In their communique Harbi and Zahouane also ask for the calling of a constituent assembly. The UNLD has made the same request. The latter, while setting as its goal "the liquidation of the dictatorial regime," specifies that "worthy men" are available in the present administration.

Popular Reactions

For Ali Mahsas, former minister of agriculture of Ben Bella and then of Boumediene, the transition could be carried out by "unanimously respected" men such as Ferhat Abbas, Ben Khedda, and Ben Bella.

Undoubtedly, the opposition is no longer in a period of intransigence. If it is necessary to change regimes, some declare themselves ready to hold a dialog with the government should the latter be willing to turn a page and initiate the democratization process. For the time being the men of the Council of the Revolution seem to be of a different mind. Claiming that they are ready to insure the continuity of the regime, they reject the appeal of the opposition

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members. Do the latter still have a chance to be heard? The opposition is first counting on the masses which may force the hand of the leaders. But the Algerians seem much more concerned by daily difficulties than by policy.

However, in this country popular reactions cannot be anticipated. Already under Boumediene ill-humor had evidenced itself--admittedly, in timid manner--through the strikes of railroad workers, bus ticket collectors, and dockers.

Acting in scattered ranks, the members of the opposition continue to ignore each other mutually even if they overlap in demanding democratization. The men of the Council of the Revolution seem to be in control of the evolution the situation. One major unknown factor which will weigh on the scale remains: The attitude of the army, the basis of power since independence and especially since 19 June 1965.

Changing of the Guard

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 27 Dec 78 and 3 Jan 79 p 58

[Article by A.M.: "What Kind of Succession?"]

[Text] Now that the succession to President Houari Boumediene is being prepared actively in Algiers, it is natural that the names of all those who played a role in the advent of independent Algeria should be mentioned.

Among the latter many are in exile, a few in prison. They are bitterly critical vis-a-vis those who govern their country while the latter return the compliment inasmuch as they have done everything to doom the former to oblivion.

Both sides have their share of the truth. It is correct to say that the Algerian leaders with President Boumediene at their head were able to build in a few years an Algeria which is being listened to on the international scene and whose independence is more clearly asserted than that of the large majority of states. It is also true that real efforts have been made in the direction of economic development.

In contrast, the balance sheet is distinctly less positive as regards political institutions and everyday life. Whereas the Algerian revolution had benefited from enthusiastic popular support, there is no doubt that none of the leaders can be qualified today as popular. Several are clearly unpopular and the image which the man in the street has of the government which has emerged from the revolution is not a glowing one. The powers which President Boumediene concentrated in his hands were exorbitant and unjustified after 16 years of independence. The metamorphosis of the National Liberation Front into a bureaucratic machine without effectiveness and without soul is disconcerting. It is this as much as the economic difficulties which explains the somberness of daily life in Algeria.

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This country has many more intellectuals, many more qualified people than the majority of Third World countries. It has succeeded in acquiring the essential attributes of a modern state. Is it not possible to envision an opening, not only vis-a-vis former leaders but especially vis-a-vis all those, young and less young, who aspire to play a role in the building of their country?

The Algerian revolution has not failed, but it is far from having succeeded. It clearly needs new blood.

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ALGERIA

LETTERS TO FRENCH PUBLICATION EXPRESS HOPE FOR CHANGE

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 10, 24 Jan 79

[Letters to JEUNE AFRIQUE by various Algerian individuals and groups in Algeria and abroad: "Special Algerian Forum--Box 250"]

[10 Jan 79, pp 7-11]

[Text] With the death of President Houari Boumediene announced at dawn on 27 December 1978, Algeria is faced with a series of choices: First, the choice of individuals but also of policies and orientations. Will the decisions to be taken be made under optimal conditions? We hope so, but it is necessary to find that the discussion has taken place so far in the wings and within a small group. The purpose of the pages below is precisely to expand the discussion, to offer those who feel involved a kind of "Algerian forum" where they can express themselves. In this initial forum we publish three letters.

The first originates from a member of the team in power in Algiers who, for obvious reasons, has wished to remain anonymous. The author of the second letter is Bechir Boumaaza, former Algerian minister. The third letter, signed by a former Algerian officer living in France, Madjid Houma, gives an account of the views of a group of emigrants.

Our Algerian forum will be open whenever necessary.

[Text of letters] Being surely one of the few privileged persons of the "democratic and popular" Algeria to have read the issue of JEUNE AFRIQUE devoted to what is really taking place in Algeria, I could not help expressing to you my feelings on what was written by Hamid Barrada in clear and very courageous fashion. I wish to apologize for the anonymous nature of my letter for, under existing circumstances, it is impossible for me to disclose my identity to you and to reveal the exact position that I hold. Know, however, that I am one step removed from the power hierarchy (and God is witness to my words) which enables me either to confirm or to deny your articles. You will

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also forgive the hardly journalistic style of my letter that I ask you to kindly bring to the attention of domestic and international public opinion in the form of a free forum or free opinion.

All the information that you report in your periodical is true. My comment will thus have no other purpose than to add to what you said. What is appropriate to specify first is the fact that Algeria is living under the regime of a bloodless coup with the installation since 22 November 1978 at the Ministry of Defense of two colonels--Chedli Ben Jedid, head of the second military region (Oran) and Abdallah Belhouichet, head of the first military region (Blida). These two men were installed by the Bouteflika-Draia-Abdelghani triumvirate--respectively, the ministers of foreign affairs, transportation, and interior.

Within the Council of the Revolution it is now confirmed that these five men form a bloc in all evidence. While the distribution of the portfolios among them in the eventuality of the accession of one of the five to supreme power is secret, it is quite easy to guess the most likely combination: Abdelaziz Bouteflika, president of Algeria; Mohamed Ben Ahmed Abdelghani, prime minister; and Ahmed Draia, minister of interior (Draia held less than 2 years ago the position of director general of the Security Police). As for the two colonels installed at the Ministry of Defense, the purpose is to tantalize each with the possibility of being the only master on board since their foot is already in the stirrup. This operation envisions no more and no less than liquidating one in some way or other inasmuch as they are bound to clash with one another some day.

The problem for the Bouteflika-Abdelghani-Draia triumvirate at the present stage is to temporize in order to win time. Why? The reason is that the death of Houari Boumediene (as I write these lines he has not died yet but the fatal end of his illness is in no way in doubt) occurs as a surprise to everybody. The threesome is thus temporizing to win time, to marshal support within the army, the mass organizations, and the country's cadres, as well as support from abroad. By winning time the trio will be able to come to the congress of the National Liberation Front under the most favorable conditions, that is, the dice having been cast in advance for the designation of a single candidate as stipulated in the Constitution. For your information I specify that the Algerian Constitution provides that in case of death (other hitches are not anticipated), the president of the People's National Assembly (Rabah Bitat) is to assume the interim presidency for 45 days during which a congress is to be called and, "upon the proposal of the FLN," to designate a candidate for election through popular universal suffrage. In short, a simple plebiscite. Now, the question that is raised today is: What is the FLN Congress in fact?

No one knows the answer because the criteria of definition, participation, and number have never been established and codified, not even by Boumediene in his speeches. As for the party, the FLN, emptied of its substance, it has never been anything so far but a machinery making empty motions with individuals representing only themselves at its head.

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A New Ben Bella

All the conflicts now taking place within the Council of the Revolution strive to have each clique's congress approved. As you mentioned in your publication, there is the clique of Mohamed Salah Yahyaoui. He is the horse being played by the Soviets who say so and let it be known through the eastern European embassies in Algiers in the course of simple, routine protocol contacts or on the occasion of some receptions organized for the purpose. Yahyaoui is also the horse on which the Libyans are placing their bets, and the recent visit of Abdessalam Jalloud in Algiers was not unrelated to this. Yahyaoui can even count on the financial backing of Tripoli. For the Libyans the death of Boumediene in itself is an asset to the extent that Boumediene was in all evidence a rival of Mu'ammarr Qadhdhafi. With Yahyaoui, to whom the Libyan President feels close and to whom he is attached, everything is then possible for concretizing the dreams that Qadhdhafi has been unable to realize with Egypt and Tunisia.

With Yahyaoui Algeria would have at its head a new Ahmed Ben Bella who wished in the spring of 1965 to have Algeria, viscerally a member of the Maghreb and Mediterranean region, join a Middle Eastern United Arab Republic, defying the nature and profound aspirations of the Algerian people. Such a possibility is to be taken seriously for I know Yahyaoui well. He is pro-Arab, trained in the native quarter of Constantine and not speaking a word of French or English. He does not possess that quality which the head of state of a country such as Algeria must have: A broad vision of problems, the capability of integrating them in the Maghreb, inter-Mediterranean, and Euro-Maghreb entity. Like it or not, Algeria is the natural element of an entity which is the Maghreb and which faces Europe with which it has all its trade. Not to take this axiom into account would be a disaster. What the Algerians should know is that with Yahyaoui at the helm it would be a return to the Middle Ages which has nothing to do with real national identity reflecting the Algerian people: A tolerant Islam, open to the modern world, to progress, an Islam where democracy reigns and where individual freedoms are respected, an Islam where the people are treated as adults.

As you so well revealed in your publication, this man was responsible at Amgala for the death of several hundred young Algerians of the national service and the capture of several dozen others. He was the cause of mourning in hundreds of Algerian families. I want this Amgala affair to be known as the personal doing of Yahyaoui after he misinformed Boumediene about the favorable logistical conditions of the operation.

The Algerian people who have been deprived of newspapers for the past 16 years and of information for the past 6 months (since the Zeghar affair), the Algerian people in whose name people bandy words, the Algerian people who are treated as minors, the Algerian people whom some are satisfied with summoning to elections in order to confirm them in their position--this people have a right to know what is going on in the shadows and in secret because it is the destiny of this people which is at stake . . . . (there followed a violent personal diatribe against Bouteflika, Abdelghani, and Draia, which we refuse to publish as is--Editor's note).

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Total Isolation

With such leaders the Algerian people should know that their future would not be secure. Quite the contrary, under the mantle of a "revolutionary continuity" we would witness on one hand oneupmanship in foreign policy whose results would be the total isolation of Algeria and on the other a maximization of certain practices in the realm of already sufficiently serious domestic policy.

I shall not speak of that poor Tayebi Larbi who does not have the courage of a Kaid Ahmed, namely, to slam the door shut and leave. He has ratified without saying a word all the fantasies of some so-called technocrats of agriculture, and their economic absurdities. We are familiar with the result: A moribund agriculture and the bulk of the foreign exchange of Algeria, which has the highest external debt of the Third World, being earmarked to food imports.

Finally, there is Ben Cherif Ahmed. He has his shortcomings like everybody else. However, it is necessary to determine that he seems to be the only one to have the courage and to say and proclaim and demand that the people have their say and choice. His observations that you cite in the conditional mood in your article are true.

The Only Solution

The fact that Ben Cherif Ahmed should have asked for a broadening of the FLN Congress to include all the cadres of the nation is known by everyone in Algiers. This is a merit that should be recognized in him and it is to his credit. It was also that of a Kaid Ahmed. If that is true it is possible that Ben Cherif Ahmed may aspire to be president of Algeria, but the fact that he thinks that the Algerian people do not have to hold a plebiscite on a single candidate but should choose among several is to his credit. I believe that this is the best and wisest solution. Paradoxically, he is the one who has an irreproachable past as a genuine resistance fighter, who probably because of this symbolizes the land now that Kaid Ahmed is out of the picture. Paradoxically then, it is Ben Cherif who demands Algeria's return to popular democracy. If this individual really believes what he says and his action over the past 20 years evidences that his commitments have always been kept, then I might as well tell you that the few officers who share my thoughts will support him and back the proposed alternative once the moment has arrived. He is incidentally the only one who can allow us to emerge from our rut. For the past 4 months Algeria has witnessed a power vacuum and for the past 4 months the Algerian people have been waiting for the white smoke to appear on the evening of each of the secret meetings of the conclave of the eight. The situation is perpetuated because we are unable to agree on one individual.

Well then, we might as well choose several, even among those who have been placed on the sidelines of the country's political life because they opposed the regime of Boumediene. For our country and for the generation to which I belong, the occasion is henceforth a unique opportunity to give the word to the people so that they may designate a chief, a genuine Algerian striving exclusively in the interest of Algeria and for the sole well-being of its people.

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[Letter by Bechir Boumaaza] The reports broadcast from the Algerian capital and which mention the parachuting of weapons from an aircraft whose citizenship was allegedly identified mandate my breaking a silence that I have deliberately observed so far. It is in consideration of the exceptional circumstances witnessed by Algeria and my personal evaluation of its domestic and external situation and, therefore, of the serious implications that untimely and inconsiderate comments on law and order and the safeguarding of independence and the integrity of the territory might generate that I have voluntarily remained silent. In this sense my silence should be interpreted as a political act and not as an abdication of my responsibilities or resignation to fate. I earmark for myself, incidentally, the right and the time to express like any Algerian my thoughts on events and individuals.

It happens that while every Algerian is free before his conscience, common sense and the most fundamental patriotism set the limits which should not be exceeded under any circumstances. First, recourse to violence must be banished in the settlement of disputes bearing on the former practices of the government or the ambiguous conditions of its succession.

We must under all circumstances emerge from the infernal cycle of violence and the settlement of accounts and espouse forms of struggle which consecrate our real reappearance as democratic forces.

We must then clearly determine "the rules of the game," those which are allowed and those which are not. This crisis--and everyone is free to give this term the content suggested to him by his own evaluation of the situation--is essentially a domestic affair. As such, it involves Algerians exclusively. To the Algerians who may be tempted to leave no stone unturned--including the use of unnatural external alliances--to discover the limits that separate the legitimate opposition from treason and disgrace; to foreign powers, big and small, close or remote, formal friends or adversaries of the moment and which, each in its way, believe that they have a voice to consolidate acquired positions and reconquer lost positions--at any rate, insure for themselves a political, economic, or military advantage through what will not in the last analysis be anything more than an episode in Algerian life, we say loyally that they will undoubtedly lose out in that game.

It is not only in Algeria that such circumstances are propitious to the awakening of unhealthy appetites which build devouring ambition into an ideal and convert it into political action. And because this assumption of position accompanied by a warning would risk being interpreted in restrictive manner, I have to specify that in the perilous moments experienced by our country my intimate conviction is that the lines of cleavage which separate well-understood patriotism from some attitudes which border on treason run indistinctly through certain members of the opposition as well as amid the centers of power. Civic behavior and lack of patriotism are found on the two sides and neither has the monopoly of virtue.



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Besides legitimate fears and apprehensions on the course of events, unhealthy ambitions have not been in short supply both inside and outside Algeria among some men in office as among some opposition members.

A deepening of the socialist revolution through the introduction of democracy has become a fundamental requirement. That is why each time that someone strives to resort to force to impose his views all he does is postpone a deadline: That of democratic confrontation, dialog, and tolerance.

Down with violence from whatever source!

[Letter from Madjid Houma, Paris, France] As a veteran of the ALN [National Liberation Army], an officer of the ANP [People's National Army], and an official well known on the basis of formal, verifiable, and controllable evidence, I have for several years been a diligent reader of JEUNE AFRIQUE. I have at times been shocked by your positions regarding my country.

You had earlier evaluated the general situation in Algeria in terms that were more than kind. And here we are heading toward a nearly complete fiasco.

Whoever may be Boumediene's successors, is Algeria doomed to always get its solutions from abroad? The will of the people which all the aspirants to power claim to follow with apparent candor will not weigh heavily, once more, at the time of confronting the genuine problems (the deficiencies) which the regime has increased during its rule.

There is no shortage of worthy and qualified men among the Algerian people. But the government in office has obliged them to go into exile, to observe a forced silence, or to despair without remedy.

Without anticipating God's will, our enslaved people have instinct and their return to complete freedom will give them a new lease on life.

Well then, in an Algeria exorcised of its false gods, begin right away to right the tiller of your boat. Grant only a limited audience to actors without a big role to play who should wait for the resuscitated nation to call them or recall them to its service if at some time it should seem that they have deserved such an honor.

As for continuity, do not preach it to us either for we need a 180-degree turnabout for the following reasons:

To face the national danger which threatens us from inside and outside.

To restore the government's impartiality and make it capable of protecting its children from danger, humiliation, and poverty.

To do away with intrigues, persecution, suspicions, and the too well-known combinations of cliques.

To put a definitive end to decay, disorder, arbitrary rule, abuses of all kinds, and totalitarianism aided and abetted by foreign masters.

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To march en masse (this is a duty and a necessity) toward salvation, general reconciliation, healthy and solid reconstruction, social justice for everyone, and finally toward a new destiny.

We have borne too much the imposition of humiliating and painful exile, corruption, monstrous profits, ignominious and revolting excesses. So much the worse if some squeamish and prudent circles do not find what they seek there. Pure and honest Algerians can be found despite the spurious choices made in Europe by offices of dreams until they discover such individuals to be men "of steel." It is true that defective steel can be found.

Heavily and shamefully orchestrated propaganda has recycled some of these men in Western circuits. The resurrection of a veracious and fraternal Algeria will also bring that of other Maghreb states. Rid of its various masks and relieved of its ire, Algeria will be restored to the unlimited love of its reconciled children and open to all human currents.

As for its genuine friends who, alas, are not numerous, they will not regret it.

I am unaware of the fate that you will give this lengthy message. But on addressing myself to you in the name of my very numerous comrades in arms and struggle inside and outside Algeria, diligent readers of JEUNE AFRIQUE, condemned to move in the shadows, I hope that our viewpoints during these supreme moments will not deserve to end up in your "file" tray.

[24 Jan 79, pp 12-13]

[Letter by H. Hadj-Smaïne, former Algerian minister in exile in France]

[Text] The death of Houari Boumediene and his prolonged agony have generated lengthy discussions on the Algerian political system. The gaps in the constitutional provisions, the overlap of the topmost organs, the soundness and legitimacy of the established entities (Council of the Revolution, National Liberation Front, People's National Army) have been abundantly commented on.

The game of making prognostications is now open to all the bettors of the political realm. The names of the eight members of the Council of the Revolution, still unknown in October 1978, all of them possible successors of the deceased Algerian President, are again on everybody's lips.

No one however is certain on which square of the board he has to place these possible successors to try to see the new directions in which the country may turn. Who, from the Moslem fundamentalist to the partisan of pro-Arabism, from the socialist to the reactionary, from the friend of the East to the friend of the West, will win the prize? Who, benefiting from the trust of the senior cadres of the People's National Army and the topmost echelons of the security authorities and the administration, will be the first to scale the dangerous steps to power?

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As is known since it has happened elsewhere, the process of the succession of power based on the single party is settled and controlled entirely from the inside. Nothing will appear from outside to immediately alter its course. No member of the present team is incidentally trying to involve the major personality of the drama: The Algerian people. To tell the truth they are not excluded but rather shown their place on the sidelines.

The coopting of the leadership teams by the FLN Congress and party, the plebiscite with a 99 and some hundredths percent majority of the votes for the strongest candidate--or the most insignificant--of the team in office are part of the facts. Official declarations do not allow room for any illusion of opening. "How should one imagine a procedure of discussion of the serious problems of the hour outside the framework of the FLN Congress?" Rabah Bitat, acting head of state, said at the installation of the preparatory committee of the Congress. And Mohamed Salah Yahyaoui, in charge of the party apparatus, stated more firmly: "If the political executive has decided to hold the Congress at this time, it is because it deems that this is the only political and constitutional alternative likely to solve the problems of the hour."

There is thus no other alternative than that of seeing the Algerian people experience once again the violation of their sovereign rights. The people are merely good for ratifying the choices that their tutors will make for them.

The democratization of the political system in its form and content will not be on the agenda. The institutions no matter how bandy-legged they may be have to survive events and individuals. Such is the stupid, even anti-historic axiom whose inconsistency and misdeeds the people must suffer.

The new and omnipotent feudal systems, moribund for the most part (SONATRACH, ONACO [Algerian National Marketing Office], ONAMO [Algerian National Manpower Bureau], OFLA [Algerian Fruit and Vegetable Office], and so on), the bureaucracy with its privileges and waste, the extreme fragmentation of the decision-making apparatus, the lack of coordination and concertation at all levels of execution, the pompous plans which disrupt the land without being offset by individual progress and cultural integration, the oppression, corruption, and trafficking--all this package remains untouched. Perhaps there are no plans to alter this state of affairs.

Valid in itself, the content of the National Charter, approved in June 1976, is not directly involved in the present discussion. The Algerian citizen knows however that the moment has come for him to wonder about the value and caliber of the men whose responsibility it will be to put its fundamental implications into operation. And if, to various degrees, the citizen in May 1976 had the opportunity to denounce their excesses, their weakness, and their deficiencies, would the moment not logically have come for the citizen to evidence to them trust or distrust? These are the very individuals who wish to direct his future. So?

The crisis which has been in the offing for years in Algeria is a genuine societal crisis. In all fields the choices, even if they were the best, which

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are made outside of the sovereign will of the people will remain contingent and subject to challenge. Will people take the immense risk of seeing this crisis become extended and aggravated? That is a historic choice that it is necessary to be able to make with all its consequences.

[Letter by a group of Algerians who are partisans of a democratic change in Algeria; Lyons, France]

It is the future of several million Algerians, it is the future of the prospective generations that is at stake today. Boumediene is dead. What is the legacy that he is leaving to the Algerians? The regime installed in Algeria is first of all a totalitarian regime. This means a regime which does not allow the free expression of opinions and ideas, where any inclination to challenge is repressed (intervention of the army against strikers, notably), where all political life is stifled.

But for the immense majority it is also the painful daily reality. The specter of shortages, the rise in prices, the obsession with securing housing, a job, the agony of public transportation, the lack of water, and so on. At the same time an arrogant bourgeoisie is accumulating fortunes on the misery of the people and there is no limit in the bourgeoisie's rush to conspicuous consumption and moral turpitude.

The death of Boumediene, often represented as a great head of state, profoundly affects the Algerian people. People do not talk about the nature of the regime in office since 1962. People forget that Boumediene, in the company of Ahmed Ben Bella at that time, seized power by crushing all opposition, that in 1965 it was by means of a coup d'etat that Boumediene became head of state by sidelining his companion of the time. The settlement of accounts, assassinations became current practice: Mahroug was sidelined in 1976, Cherif Balkacem in 1975, Ahmed Medeghri (assassinated) in 1974, Kaid Ahmed in 1972, and so on. As for the members of the opposition, they were condemned to death (Hocine Ait Ahmed, Mohamed Boudiaf, and so on) or were even assassinated (Krim Belkacem, Mohamed Khider).

By presenting the eight survivors of the Council of the Revolution as the only possible successors to Boumediene an attempt has been made to create the impression that the Algerian people are ready to accept that Boumediene's policy should continue. Why do people speak of the order and calm in Algeria without mentioning the proliferation of roadblocks by the gendarmerie and of police checks? Why is there no outrage at the lack of information from the Algerian authorities?

Paradoxically, this very press, which does not spare its support for the partisans of democracy when the totalitarian regimes of Latin America, Africa, or Eastern Europe are concerned, denies such support to the Algerians who have been fighting for many years in their country and at times as political exiles abroad for the advent of democratic freedoms in Algeria. Even better, it was written that Ait Ahmed and Boudiaf, both of them exiled, had become "cut off

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from Algerian realities" to be able to make themselves heard in Algeria. This is a gratuitous assertion. In 1954 the colonial government considered those individuals who prepared and then unleashed the war of liberation as a handful of rebels isolated from the rest of the population. Boudiaf, Ait Ahmed, and many others already belonged to that group.

It thus appears that the concern of some "journalists" is to discourage, by quieting it, the struggle for a democratic change in Algeria which some Algerians are waging--they are more and more numerous--and to make it appear as an isolated fact. It is the Algerian people who are despised, the people who nurse an immense hope for change.

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ALGERIA

ALGERIAN-BELGIAN COOPERATION

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 19 Jan 79 p 128

[Text] Belgium takes necessary measures to increase its trade with Algeria.

On the occasion of the 15th Algiers International Fair, Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Henri Simonet, accompanying an important delegation, sojourned in Algeria. At that time he did not fail to emphasize the scope of the cooperative projects that were being negotiated between the two countries, having to do in particular with railway and road transport and harbor installations. These projects confirmed Belgium's intention to cooperate with Algeria in the development of already very extensive and diversified economic relations, making of this country one of its main African partners, if not the main one.

Without waiting for the designation of President Boumediene's successor and thus showing confidence in the industrial development of Algeria and in its economy, as well as in its political future, Belgian officials are preparing for increased commercial trade with this country. A recent report broadcast by AGEFI (Economic and Financial Agency) supports this. It mentioned governmental conversations that took place in recent weeks for the purpose of increasing the possibilities of DUCROIRE in Algeria's favor. We recall that the national office of DUCROIRE is a Belgian public establishment that aims to encourage foreign trade by granting appropriate guarantees to decrease foreign trade risks, especially credit risks. Its guarantees are in the form of insurance policies.

According to AGEFI, J. Groothaert, director general and administrator of Foreign Trade, recalled that "Algeria had had a great concentration of credits in recent months, which involves increased cover risks. However, we cannot ignore the fact that Algeria is now offering some projects of great scope to Belgium and that that country is turning to ours to acquire highly technical products. In addition, we have concluded an important agreement for Algerian liquified gas which we will begin to receive in

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1982 and which will represent an expenditure of 8 to 10 billion a year for Belgium. We therefore will have sufficient liquidity to absorb the credits. Algeria intends to cooperate with us within an organized framework in such fields as hydraulic energy, transports, housing, iron metallurgy, cement works, and textiles; and great decorators have concluded, or will conclude, contracts which will have important repercussions at the level of sub-contracts in Belgium. It was thus necessary to increase the DUCROIRE state commitments, which the government has done.

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ALGERIA

JAPANESE GROUP TO BUILD LIQUIFIED OIL GAS PLANT

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 12 Jan 79 p 68

[Text] The Algerian national enterprise, SONATRACH, on 11 December 1978 granted a signed contract to the Japanese group, C. Itah and IHI (Ishikawajima-Harima Heavy Industries) to build a processing GPL (liquified oil gas) plant in Bethioua (Arzew), which will produce an annual 2.2 million tons of propane and 1.8 million tons of butane.

This plant will handle four kinds of processing, with a basic annual unit capacity of one million tons of GPL. Production will begin in 1981.

In addition, SONATRACH will very soon ask for bids to build a second GPL processing plant, with an annual capacity of five million tons.

The APS [Algerian Press Service] emphasizes that, within the framework of the VALHYD (Valorization of hydrocarbons) program, these two plants, as well as the one that has already been operating in Arzew since 1972, will make it possible to implement the policy of maximum recovery of GPL from various oil fields (Hassi R'mel, Alrar, Rhourde-Nouss, etc.) and of oil.

At Arzew, arrangements have been made in the fields to assure the production and processing of gas, as well as the transportation of the GPL to the coast. For that purpose work has already been started on a 24-inch Hassi R'mel-Arzew pipeline, having a capacity of nine million tons of GPL. Its construction has been allotted by SONATRACH to the American company, BECHTEL. The contract for this 510 km long project amounts to about \$150 million, covered up to \$118 by a loan.

The GPL is intended both for exportation, to be effected from the port of Arzew-El Djedid, and for national consumption, which has increased more than tenfold in 10 years.

Financing for this GPL processing plant covers all of the foreign goods and services and local costs; it amounts to 2,200 million dinars.

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(Let us recall that agreements were recently concluded with Canada for the Rhourde-Nouss natural gas plant. See MTM of 22 December 1978, p 3491.)

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ALGERIA

1978 HYDROCARBON PRODUCTION AND EXPORTS

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 12 Jan 79 p 68

[Text] According to the agency, ALGERIAN PRESS SERVICE, the balance sheet for Algerian national production of hydrocarbons shows full realization of its objectives. The APS specifies that the production of crude and refined petroleum amounted to 57.2 million tons in 1978, an increase of 7 percent compared with production in 1977 (53.5 million tons), the latter being an increase of 7 percent over 1976 (50.1 million tons).

The APS pointed out that 85 percent of the quantities produced were exported as crude. The remaining 15 percent was refined at home and abroad for internal consumption (4.5 million tons) and for exportation of refined products (3.5 million net tons).

Algerian production of natural gas furthermore rose to 14.1 billion m<sup>3</sup>, that is, an increase of 70 percent compared with 1977 (8.3 billion m<sup>3</sup>). Exportation of gas rose to 6.4 billion m<sup>3</sup> in liquified form (LNG) [liquified natural gas], an increase of 60 percent compared with 1977 (4 billion m<sup>3</sup>).

Finally, the production of GPL [liquified petroleum gas] (propane and butane), rose to 900,000 tons, 300,000 of which were exported. Production of exported basic petro-chemicals (methanol and ethylene) amounted to 81,000 tons.

The national agency added that total currency receipts by Algeria from the hydrocarbon sector amounted to \$6,200 million in 1978, that is, about \$400 million more than in 1977.

Maritime Transports: Launching of the DAHRA

DAHRA, a ship to transport wine, built for the CNAN (Algerian National Navigation Company), was launched this past 22 December at the SCHLICHTING shipyard near Lubeck, in Federal Germany. This highly

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automated ship has a carrying capacity of 3,600 tons, is 90 meters long and 13.60 meters wide. A 3,000 horsepower diesel engine assures it a speed of 13.5 knots.

In addition to wine, the ship's modern equipment makes it possible to also transport vegetable or mineral oils, as well as liquid chemical products.

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ALGERIA

AGREEMENTS WITH JAPANESE, CZECH COMPANIES FOR PHOSPHATE FERTILIZER COMPLEXES AT TEBESSA, ANNABA

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 12 Jan 79 p 68

[Text] Two Japanese firms, the MARUBENI Corp. and HITACHI Shibuilding and Engineering Company, and the Polish state company, POLYMEX-CEKOP, have been contracted by SONATRACH (Algerian Hydrocarbons National Company) to build two phosphate complexes in Algeria at a total cost of 1,550 million dinars (about 1.7 billion francs or \$400 million).

The recently concluded agreement between these companies includes financing, with 130 percent in foreign currency, covering all of the imported goods and services and a portion of the local costs of the two phosphate complexes. These complexes will be located in Annaba, an important industrial city, and Tebessa, in the extreme eastern part of the country.

The Annaba unit, which has had a first phosphate complex since 1971, will include a shop for sulphuric acid--1,600 tons a day; a shop for phosphoric acid--500 tons a day; a shop for the manufacture of fertilizer (di-ammono/phosphate)--231,000 tons a year; a second shop for the manufacture of fertilizer (mono-ammono/phosphate)--198,000 tons a year; and various installations to pulverize the phosphates and for storage.

The Tebessa unit will consist of similar sulphuric and phosphoric acid shops as those in Annaba, as well as a shop for the manufacture of an annual 280,000 tons of triple super-phosphate fertilizer and a shop for an annual 5,000 tons of aluminum fluoride.

The Polish company, POLYMEX-CEKOP, has been charged specifically with installing sulphuric acid shops in the two complexes, both to be installed simultaneously, in order to assure that they will be in operation by the end of 1982. The APS agency says that that will make it possible for SONATRACH to accomplish its plan to produce fertilizer. It aspires to meet the total needs of Algerian agriculture for the next 10-year period and

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to valorize an important quantity of phosphates earmarked for exportation.

A Japanese source specifies that the total value of the contract would be set at parity of 80 billion yens. It is divided into 12 billion yens for the Polish enterprise; 52 billion yens for installations to manufacture phosphate fertilizer; and 16 billion yens for construction projects and materiel to be furnished by Algeria. The Import-Export Bank of Japan will provide a loan, in yens, for the Japanese portion of the projects.

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ALGERIA

BRIEFS

TLEMSEN SERICULTURE CENTER--The Tlemcen Sericulture Center has been granted a supplementary allotment for the planting of 1,000 hectares of mulberry trees and 170,000 m<sup>2</sup> for sericulture. An investment on the order of 24 million dinars has been allotted for this operation, which will be paid for over a period of four years. The national agency, Algerian Press Service, observes that the new plantings should make it possible to satisfy the needs of the textile mill unit now in the process of being built, with completion estimated for the beginning of next year. The overall sericulture program undertaken in this region already has 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> for sericulture and there are 1,000 hectares of mulberry trees in the growing stage. An objective of 50 tons of cocoons is envisaged. This objective is required to produce five tons of silk, that is, 60,000 m<sup>2</sup> a year of natural silk cloth. [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 19 Jan 79 p 128] 8255

MARITIME STUDIES BUREAU--On 10 January the secretary general of the Algerian Ministry of Public Works inaugurated a Maritime Studies Bureau. The latter, located in Algiers (Avenue de l'Independence) specializes in engineering activities, notably with respect to the harbor and maritime infrastructures to be installed along the entire coast, thereby completing the entire integration of the sector of technical studies. In reporting the opening of this center, the daily, EL MOUDJAHID, observes that, equipped with an important laboratory, it "is in answer to the desire of the officials of the Ministry of Public Works to limit the activities of foreign organizations which are entrusted with studies on maritime and harbor projects and which generally turn out to be unfavorable, particularly from the viewpoint of the quality of construction and the application of technology. This bureau will provide assistance to all public offices and to local communities." [Text] [Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 19 Jan 79 p 127] 8255

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IRAN

BRIEFS

BREZHNEV-KHOMEYNI EMISSARIES--Mr Leonid Brezhnev secretly met with emissaries of Ayatollah Khomeyni during his visit to Bulgaria (13 to 17 January). It was at the end of this interview that the Soviet press unconditionally approved, for the first time, on January 20, the Islamic movement of Ayatollah Khomeyni. [Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 21 Feb 79 p 26]

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PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

SOCOTRA ISLAND REPORTED TO BE SOVIET MISSILE BASE

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 28 Dec 78-3 Jan 79 p 14

[Text] One of the Arab agencies suggested that the government of Aden organize a trip for Arab newsmen and foreign correspondents assigned to the Middle East, to the Island of Socotra. This would serve to confirm their denial of American intelligence reports which say that the inhabitants of this arid island had been evacuated recently in order to turn it into a missile base on which the Russians have installed a network of ICBMs, which is capable of encontrolling the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. Moreover, their range takes in a circle with a radius of 3,500 kilometers; in other words, the entire Middle East is in their range.

In this regard, it is to be remembered that Baghdad put an end to the myth of the Soviet base in "Ummal-Qasr" a few years ago, right after the ratification of the Iraqi-Soviet friendship pact, when she organized a big press outing to the harbor or "Ummal-Qasr".

The American and Western propaganda machines have begun launching a widespread attack on South Yemen which tries to portray her as having been burned into a Soviet military base.

In this regard, American intelligence reports, supported by Sudani and Somali sources, say that the Cubans, who learned their military role in Eritrea, have sent 2,000 officers and enlisted men to train the people's Militia in South Yemen in the most up-to-date methods of combat.

These reports add that about 200 security officers from East Germany have come to work as advisers and trainers for the Yemen general security forces, while hundreds of Soviet officers work as advisers and trainers in the army of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

These reports pointed out that a Soviet destroyer was to anchor on a continuing basis in the waters of the city of al-Mukalla after completion of construction of a naval airbase there.

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SAUDI ARABIA

BRIEFS

JAPANESE-SAUDI METHANOL FACTORY--The first result of Japanese Prime Minister Fukuda's trip to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will take the form of the direct participation of the Japanese Government in a joint Saudi-Japanese project to construct a factory to produce methanol from natural gas. The factory will be in the new harbor or al-Jubayl in the Arabian Gulf, and its productive capacity is estimated at 600,000 tons. The marketing of the factory's proposed production has already been assured, as a Japanese group, which includes the company "ITO" has agreed to import 85 percent of the factory's production, an amount that will provide 60 percent of the Japanese methanol consumption. It is expected that a second round of discussions will take place in Tokyo during the coming month between the Saudi committee of basic industries, and the group of Japanese companies which will take part in the project. This second round of discussions will be to work out the final details before signing the joint contracts at the end of March 1979. The implementation of the project will cost \$4 million. The Saudi treasury will cover 60 percent of it, while 30 percent of it will be covered by a joint Saudi-Japanese company, provided that the Japanese Government and financial institutions participate in picking up the rest of the tab. [Text] [Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 4-10 Jan 79 p 55] 9814

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TUNISIA

ALLEGED SECRET GROUP CHARGED WITH INFILTRATING ARMY

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 27 Dec 78 and 3 Jan 79 pp 52-53

[Article by Souhayr Belhassen: "Who Is Afraid of Zohra Makhlouf?"]

[Text] "Girl wishes to meet officer aged 35 with a view to marriage. Write to Presse Publicite No 49085." Between the time that this advertisement was published in the Tunisian daily LA PRESSE on 3 March 1978 and the trial which was concluded on 7 December 1978 before the military court there is the story of a surprising revolt.

The year of Tunisia's independence, 1956, was for the young Zohra Makhlouf a year when she received her studies certificate and passed the entrance examination into secondary school. It was also the year when her father, a minor functionary in the public administration at Bizerte, lost his job. These two events left a deep impression on the adolescent girl.

Hypercritical

With their home sold, with her mother and then her father dead, Zohra found herself head of the family at the age of 17. Her wages of 34 Tunisian dinars as an elementary schoolteacher were insufficient to cover the rent of the room where the family was squeezed in and to pay for the studies of her younger brothers and sisters. Zohra however continued her own studies with determination, earned her baccalaureate, and looked on the success of her family members as a genuine mission for her.

For Zohra, "the individual is always responsible for his actions." A fervent [Moslem] believer, she rejected any determinism and forbade the term "maktub" [it is written or destined]. Injustice and social inequality revolted her. She believed in an Islamic socialism and in a classless society.

Discreet, secretive, strict about anything involving morality and mores, Zohra did not preach the good word: She acted. She gave all her wages to others--relatives, neighbors, or strangers. Wearing the same overcoat for 10 years, cutting her own hair, Zohra used to knit the clothes that she needed. The small library at the foot of her bed was that of a student in the graduating class: The "Provinciales" by Pascal, "The Fall" by Camus, others by Giono,

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lonenco, Shakespeare. Reading everything that fell into her hands, she did not buy any newspapers. After living for a year with one of her sisters in the village of Zhana midway between Bizerte and Tunis, in October [1978] Zohra Makhlouf returned to her family in Bizerte. That is where she was arrested at dawn on 4 November 1978.

Accused of undermining the dignity of the army, forming an illegal organization and encouraging military personnel to join an illegal association having a political goal, Zohra Makhlouf appeared before the military court on 23 November 1978. Veiled, wearing dark glasses, Zohra listened without flinching to the reading of the charges pressed against her following the advertisement that she had placed in the newspaper in March. Zohra, who was born in a garrison town, has always had boundless admiration for the military uniform, to her the synonym of order, authority, power, and justice.

Clandestine Organization

The first military man who answered the advertisement was a naval officer from Bizerte. But he did not go to the appointment set at Belvedere Park in Tunis. At his base Zohra was told that the officer had been transferred to Sfax. The same thing happened with officer M'Rabet, with the difference that Zohra met him by going to the Meltine barracks (near Bizerte). But he also skipped showing up for the second appointment.

Officer M'Rabet, as well as officer Ben Amor, who answered a second advertisement which appeared in June 1978, told the examining magistrate that during their meetings Zohra encouraged them to stage a military plot to topple the regime. The young Tunisian woman claimed to belong to an organization whose goal was to insure the success of the "revolution." Officer Ben Amor added that Zohra Makhlouf developed her theses at length, mentioning the deterioration of the economic, political, and cultural situation in Tunisia, which she did in front of one of the officer's colleagues, presented to his "fiancee" as a "reliable friend." Zohra reportedly even gave them the organization's program.

After denying everything lock, stock, and barrel, Zohra Makhlouf exploded at the time of her confrontation with the officers.

A Mission

"Traitors," she told them, "unable to keep a secret, unworthy of the unit and the people whom you serve, this people whose rights are being violated, you are slaves and not free officers. Yes," she added, "I am a member of an organization whose goal is the toppling of the regime by the army. My mission is to make contact with the largest number of high-ranking officers capable of staging a military coup d'etat."

Turned on, Zohra continued by declaring that the people have been "reduced to misery" before she launched on an attack of the regime which she blamed for this situation.

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Then, Zohra Makhlouf referred to the events of 26 January 1978, asserting that her organization was the product of that day of rioting. Finally she added: "I am not afraid of the consequences of what I say or what I do. But especially, don't try to find out which is my organization or who are its members."

Attorney Hila, a veteran of the bar, defended the accused girl before the military court. The defense counsel showed that it is not possible to speak of the formation of an illegal organization since, despite the means available to military security, the existence of such an organization was not proven. Now, he said, can one speak of incitement to join an organization when Article 130 [? of the Constitution] mentions only recognized movements. As for the charge of undermining the army's dignity, it cannot be made to stand up according to Article 91 of the law of military procedures unless it occurred in a public place. That was not the case with the office of the examining magistrate.

Surprise

Attorney Hila was undoubtedly convincing. On 7 December 1978 the accused girl was acquitted. The epilog is as surprising as the case. Should one believe that Zohra's revolt is individual, as the verdict would prompt one to think? Or does she conceal something which is more significant than the visible portion?

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